

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSSTATE WHASHDC 8583
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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
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UNCLAS SINGAPORE 4094

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR US PR
SUBJECT: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON US/PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS

1. EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S STRIATS TIMES EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE
US-PHILIPPINES BASE NEGOTIATIONS WILL WORK OUT SATISFACTORILY
BECAUSE OF STRONG MUTUAL INTEREST IN MAINTAINING AMERICAN
MILITARY PRESENCE AND VALUE OF THIS LAST U.S. BASE IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA TO NON-COMMUNIST NATIONS IN THE REGION.

2. FULL TEDT FOLLOWS:

3. "THIS WEEK THE US ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS,
MR. RICHARD HOLBROOKE, WILL BE HAVING EXPLORATORY TALKS IN
MANILA WITH PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS ON THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN
BASES AT CLARK AND SUBIC AS WELL AS ON AGREEMENTS FOR MUTUAL
DEFENCE AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THE NEGOTIATIONS
ON THESE ISSUES HAVE LONGGITALLED OVER VARIOUS POINTS,
THE MAIN ONE BEING FILIPINO INSISTENCE TO ESTABLISH
CLEARLY FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE US BASES, SPECIFICALLY
WITH THE AMERICANS HAVING TO PAY RENT FOR THE USE OF
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PHILIPPINES DISCUSSIONS, PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS COME
OUT WITH THE VIEW THAT THE PHILIPPINES WOULD BE READY
TO ACCEPT AID FOR ECONOMIC PROJECTS AS PARTIAL RENTAL
OR COMPENSATION FOR THE AMERICAN BASES. MR MARCOS
HAS NOT, HOWEVER, SET OUT IN DETAIL HOW THIS COULD BE
WORKED OUT, BUT HIS STATEMENT NEVERTHELESS REPRESENTS
A SLIGHT CHANGE OF MIND, A MODIFICATION TOWARDS

PRACTICALITY. WHETHER CALLED AID OR RENT, AMERICAN DOLLARS ARE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME.

4. "OF COURSE, THINGS ARE NOT ALL THAT SIMPLE, BUT AS AN INDICATION OF MANILA'S FLEXIBILITY, MR. MARCOS HAS RAISED HOPES THAT THE PROCEEDINGS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WILL BE LESS ROUGH. IT IS POSSIBLE TO NARROW THE DIFFERENCES SEPARATING THEM, FOR THE US HAS ALREADY ACKNOWLEDGED A READINESS TO GRANT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID. EVEN ON MATTERS OF CONTROL AND JURISDICTION, IT SHOULD BE NOT TOO DIFFICULT TO ALLOW THE US TO RETAIN AN EFFECTIVE SAY IN THE RUNNING OF THE BASES WHILE ACCOMMODATING THE PHILIPPINES' DESIRE TO ACHIEVE FORMAL COMMAND. THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE IRONED OUT, FOR BOTH COUNTRIES SHARE A COMMON OVER-RIDING STRATEGIC AND SECURITY INTEREST IN MAINTAINING AN AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE AREA. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT OF THE VALUE OF THE US BASES, THE LAST TO REMAIN IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, NOT ONLY IN LOGISTICS AND STRATEGIC TERMS IN THE REGION AND BEYOND, TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, BUT ALSO FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS-- TO BOOST CONFIDENCE AND MORALE AMONG NON-COMMUNIST NATIONS."

HOLDRIDGE

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